Our Boys in France

George W. McDaniel

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OUR BOYS IN FRANCE

BY

GEORGE W. McDANIEL

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BY
GEO. W. McDANIEL

TO

My Wife

THE

Proud Mother

OF A

Marine of Seventeen

INTRODUCTION.

On July the 25th by appointment of the Program Committee I delivered an address before the Dover Baptist Association, which includes most of the Richmond Baptist Churches, on "Our Boys in France." No thought was entertained of publishing the address. Some who heard it asked that it be repeated to their communities, and the *Religious Herald* expressed the hope that it be furnished that paper for publication. From July to the third week in September I spoke at various places in Virginia and in Washington upon this subject. On every occasion some auditor asked for a copy of the speech or for parts of it. No manuscript had been prepared and it was impossible to comply with the requests. Then I conceived the idea of enlarging the material into a small book. Cheap binding seemed unworthy of our young men, and so imported English cloth and an original stamp of the insignia of the army, navy, marines, and aviators stamped on the back was made possible by charging a nominal price for the book. In this way I have sought to put in permanent form my inadequate tribute to "Our Boys," one hundred and sixty-five of whom, including my only boy, have gone from the Church of which I am pastor. I send this message forth to the parents, wives, sisters, and sweethearts of "Our Boys" in the hope that it may heighten the appreciation we already feel for them.

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"OUR BOYS" IN FRANCE

HERE are forty-nine nations in the world. Twenty-eight are engaged in war; five others have severed diplomatic relations with the Central Powers. Only sixteen remain neutral. Thus ninety-two per cent., a billion and a half, of the earth's population, is involved in this war, and every individual on the globe is affected by it. Belgium and France are the battle fields where the mightiest conflict of the ages is raging, and where the destiny of the race is being decided. Into this world struggle the United States is throwing her vast resources and she has become the deciding factor in the final outcome. Scarcely a person

among us has not some near relation in the service of our country. Our bodies are here, but our hearts are with the boys "over there."

They Also Serve.

In speaking of "Our Boys," however, I would not be unmindful of those who are kept in the camps here; nor, indeed, of any of our men in the service. I would include those who were detained for weary, monotonous months in camps, as were the Virginia men at Anniston. Far easier would it have been for them to go across without delay. It was hard for them to learn that,

> "They also serve
> Who only stand and wait."

I am also thinking of those enlisted

men detailed to service at home, whose ambition was to go to France. A short time ago I officiated at the wedding of a captain. He has since become a major. It was not a "war wedding." He and his fiancee were college mates and sweethearts of those halcyon college days in Texas and were engaged at the time America entered the war. He volunteered and in a manly way, commendable beyond words, said to his sweetheart: "I could not in honor marry when duty calls me to leave you, probably never to see you again. If you wish to be released from the engagement, I will free you." She, a very sensible young lady, agreed with him in his first proposition, but promised to wait the issue of the war. He was well equipped physically

and intellectually and was promptly commissioned in the Officers' Training Camp as a captain. When the men he trained went across, he was detached from his company and detailed to service in the Officers' Instruction Camp. His disappointment was keen when the higher authorities informed him that he could be more valuable to the country training officers at home, and that in all probability he would not see France during the war. Then it was, and not until then, that he married, for, as he said, he needed comfort in his hour of greatest disappointment.

The government alone knows where one is most needed and where it assigns a man there is his post of duty. Military discipline does not consult the preferences

of individuals. It commands and they obey. While this war continues the men in the service of our country at home should not feel that they are any less patriotic than those abroad; after the war is over there must be no discrimination against the men who performed the less spectacular tasks. Their part is essential to the success of the army in Europe. After the battle of Ziklag, David established a just rule that whoever stayed behind with the baggage shared equally with those who went to the front: "As his share is that goeth down to battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall share alike." I Samuel 30:24. Those two hundred men left behind did not want to stay, but they could not go on, and David

justly placed them among the victors. The schools of Texas, on April 21st of each year, celebrate San Jacinto Day—the battle in which Texas won her independence from Mexico. Among the heroes of that battle the Texans number and honor the men who were sternly detailed by General Sam Houston to keep the camp and who wept because they were not in the battle. Three hundred thousand American soldiers in France are kept out of the trenches for construction work and the like. It is not surprising that they chafe; they want to fight. Who would say that their brows shall not wear the same laurels as those that crown the heads of the men in action? They are all comrades and

equally important to the winning of the war.

I would also include those who have the spirit to serve but are physically disqualified. A little while ago I spoke in a camp where many men made profession of faith. Among them was one whose stalwart form impressed me. On leaving the "Y" this big fellow was seen standing by the door with anxious face and tearful eyes. I took his hand again and inquired; "You have surrendered to Christ; isn't it well with your soul?" "Yes, sir, I have given myself to Him. My soul is saved, but my heart is broken. They told me to-day I was rejected because of a leaking heart." He and all like him are as genuine heroes as those who fall on the fields of France. Pa-

triotism is a thing of the spirit. Yes, and I would put a gold star in the service flag of the churches for every man who died in the camps of America. They did their part and none could do more. They answered the call of their country and when God called the roll in Heaven they answered "here" to their names. They measured to the lines,

> "God's test of manhood is, I know,
> Not, Will he come? but, Did he go?"

We call them familiarly "Our Boys" and they are our very own; but they are really men now. The moment a boy puts on the American uniform he passes from boyhood to manhood, with all of a man's self-reliance, independence, reliability and courage. Oh, a wonderful change has come over "Our Boys," and

as if by a magician's wand tens of thousands have become men!

Figures that Astound.

"Our Boys" compose the largest army ever mobilized by the United States. The volunteer spirit had not been lacking, for even before America entered the war thirty thousand American lads had gone to Canada, crossed the Atlantic and were fighting with the Allies. The selective draft, however, was adopted as the only fair and sufficient method of building an army and we have now about 250,000 in the navy and more than 3,200,000 in the army. Next year we shall have an army of at least 5,500,000, and if it is necessary to win the war we will raise an army of ten million.

What of "Our Boys" in France? They constitute the largest army and navy ever sent so great a distance by any nation. Heroditus records that the boats groaned under the tread of the Persians as they crossed the Hellespont to conquer Greece, and a poet describes their King Xerxes in lines familiar to every school boy:

"A king sat on his rocky brow
That overlooked sea-born Salamis,
And ships by thousands lay below,
And men in nations all were his.
He counted them at break of day,
And when the sun set, where were they?"

That army of Xerxes probably did not exceed 900,000 men. The Russian army and navy in the Russo-Japanese war does not contradict my statement, for

the Russian army in the East was not as numerous as our army in France, and their navy under Rojestvensky was destroyed as it entered Japanese waters. The United States had landed more men in France by July 4th than Great Britain sent across the channel of thirty miles during the first year of the war; we landed more men in France in that time than were enlisted under the stars and bars from '61 to '65; we have trained for service a larger army than that with which Germany invaded France in 1914.

In Fine Fettle.

"Our Boys" are the most physically fit men fighting in Europe. The health record of our army surpasses that of any army in the world's history: the

death rate being eight out of every thousand here and abroad. Thirty-two per cent. of the men examined in the war between the States were rejected for physical disability, while only twenty-three and seven-tenths per cent. of the first 3,082,949 examined for this war were rejected. That means an increase in physical efficiency of eight and three-tenths per cent. Are you not surprised that the city boys averaged higher than the country boys? In the gymnasiums and swimming pools and on the vacant lots and athletic fields of the towns and cities as well as in the open air and on the farms "Our Boys" developed agility, strength, and skill with which to meet and master the Huns. The hygienic and preventive measures in city schools also

helped to produce this result. A father had a son with a strong aversion to digging in the dirt or chopping wood. One hot afternoon in May he saw this boy cultivating the garden until he was soaked with perspiration. Finishing this job he went, of his own accord, to the wood-pile and began chopping wood. The father was both amused and amazed. He inquired of the boy's sister, "What has come over brother?" "Oh," she said, "in the physical examination for the marines this morning they told him he was two pounds over weight, and he is reducing." This same lad a few weeks later wrote from Paris Island: "We drilled seven and a half hours yesterday and hiked six miles. We were naturally tired and hungry by supper time. We

ate heartily of a wholesome and substantial meal, after which the major told us there were some potatoes that ought to be watered, and while he did not order us to do so, we knew that he would like for them to be attended to. Whereupon every man in the mess, without a murmur, went out and toted water three-eighths of a mile to water sweet potatoes until it was too dark to see them, for each man realized that to whip 'Kaiser Bill' he had to have something to eat." In all the strenuous labors of camp training he never uttered one complaint to the folks at home. Had we not misunderstood "Our Boys" in thinking them lovers of ease and pleasure seekers? When the tocsin of war sounded they leaped into heroes.

Youth Will Not Be Denied.

"Our Boys" are the freshest and the most spirited fighters in Europe. The British are constitutionally phlegmatic. The war had raged a year before England was aroused. John Bull was never noted for alertness. An Englishman dined where an American told this joke: "A lawyer by the name of Strange requested that when he died no tombstone be erected over his grave, for people passing would pause and say, 'That's Strange.' " Everybody laughed except the Englishman. There was nothing funny in it to him. Next morning at breakfast the point struck him and he shook with laughter. That evening he undertook to tell the story to another party. Said

he: "A lawyer by the name of Strange requested his friends not to build a monument over his grave, for people would pause there and say, 'That's extraordinary.' " The British and the French, our brave Allies, are war-weary. Probably two million of their best young men sleep under the sod, and many others are wounded or disabled for life. The fighting forces of Europe after four years naturally became stale. Every athlete knows the danger of over-training and of long, continuous seasons of games. The American lads land fresh and full of fight. They are eager for the fray. The French marvel at the quickness with which our men move and learn. In a sense, they are like country boys coming to town with eyes that see and ears that

hear and minds that remember. The very voyage across the sea feeds their zeal to land and fight. They go about their tasks with a song. A French girl remarked that she so loved to hear the Americans sing, and she loved most to hear their national hymn, "Hail, hail, the gang's all here!" The Germans cannot quench, nor can they successfully meet these fresh Americans with their dauntless spirits. The first week in June our machine gunners rode thirty hours in trucks to the yielding Allies' lines and leaped out and threw their guns into position and for thirteen hours, without rest or sleep, held against the mad rush of the Huns. When the Covington had been struck by a torpedo from a submarine and was sinking, an American lad in-

quired of Chaplain Perry Mitchell, "Say, Chaplain, where do you get a taxi?" When the men from another sunken vessel were floating on rafts in the ocean they sang, "Say, where do we go from here, boys, where do we go from here?" You cannot whip men like those. Aye, and they have heartened our Allies who now fight with renewed zest and determination.

A Happy Combination.

"Our Boys" combine the best qualities of all the Allies. In them are to be found the gallantry of the French, the sturdiness of the British, the dash of the Italians, and the initiative and resourcefulness of the Colonials. Did I say the gallantry of the French? A Baptist

pastor from Paris said in New York: "American soldiers in France had conquered the love and sympathy of the French people because they exhibit a life of purity, so symbolic of the flag and every virtue that you have, every quality that you own."

Knighthood is in flower among our lads in France. They are big brothers to the orphans. They are guardians of frightened women. They are benefactors of the sufferers in devastated districts. Now and then when one of our lads is killed there come to light deeds of charity and chivalry of which the world had not known. For instance, the letter from Greayer Clover's chum to the dear lad's father, telling of how Greayer gave to a family of Belgium refugees "his five

blankets, all that he had, and then bought the kid clothes and sent him to school—all out of his pay." "Charity suffereth long and is kind."

> "His strength is as the strength of ten
> Because his heart is pure."

Did I say the sturdiness of the British? The American marines, who have never yielded an inch of ground to an enemy in any war on any soil, and do not know the order "Retreat," stood like a stone wall between the barbarians and Paris. After the first and second lines of French had broken and a French major had given a written order to a marine captain to retreat, the American colonel, on being shown the order, exclaimed: "Retreat!

We have been ordered to hold, and hold we will!" And hold they did.

Did I say the dash of the Italians? There is my old commandant at Baylor University back in the nineties, Brigadier General Beaumont Bonaparte Buck, the first American general to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for conspicuous gallantry. Quiet, competent, courageous, he served uncomplainingly as a regular at various posts through the years since he graduated at West Point two classes before Pershing. His hour of glory struck in France and he was there to answer. In an engagement his subordinate officers were wounded or killed and the situation was critical. General Buck, with that calmness, alertness, and fearlessness that made him a hero with

the college boys, hurried along the lines, steadied his men, gave the order, "Forward!" and lead them in a dashing charge to their objective. Witness also the Americans marching through water up to their arm pits and, discarding their coats, charging and pursuing the Huns in their shirt sleeves and pushing on the farthest distance of the Allies and breaking the much heralded "Friedensturm."

Several companies of the marines who had been in battle for days and lost heavily in wounded and killed were being replaced by fresh troops. Though their ranks were decimated and those who remained should have been tired, as they marched from the front, keeping perfect step, they sang. And what was the song? It was their service song. Never

have I been so thrilled as when I heard six thousand marines in the "Gym" at Quantico, led by the marine band, sing:

"From the halls of Montezuma,
To the shores of Tripoli,
We fight our country's battles
On the land as on the sea.
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title
Of the United States Marine!

From the Pest Hole of Cavite,
To the ditch of Panama,
You will find them very needy
Of Marines—that's what we are—
We're the watch dogs of a pile of coal,
Or we dig a magazine;
Though he lends a hand at every job,
Who would not be a Marine?

Our flag's unfurled to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun;
We have fought in every clime or place
Where we could take a gun.

In the snow of far-off northern lands,
And in sunny tropic scenes,
You will find us always on the job,
The United States Marines!

Here's health to you and to our corps,
Which we are proud to serve;
In many a strife we have fought for life
And never lost our nerve!
If the army and the navy
Ever look on Heaven's scenes
They will find the streets are guarded
By the United States Marines.

Did I say the resourcefulness of the Canadians and Australians? American engineers—the most efficient, by the way, on the globe—at Cambrai converted their spades into weapons and in the second battle of the Somme, when the fifth army broke, these engineers helped to close the gap and save the day. One private

from Chicago captured, without aid, eighty-three German prisoners, including five officers. He found himself surrounded in "No Man's Land" at daybreak and was forced to surrender. A heavy barrage was falling behind the Germans that cut them off from their lines. They asked how many Americans were in front of them and what they were doing. He replied, "There are eight regiments just ready to attack." Thus cut off from the rear and fearing capture, the Germans proposed to surrender to him if he would treat them kindly. He said, "Americans are civilized and always treat prisoners fairly." They disarmed and one American marched five officers and seventy-eight men through his own lines to the prison cage.

To a reporter he remarked, "No wonder the Germans believe the lies of their officers and militarists; they believed me when I told them there were eight regiments in our line." Another American, wounded in the arm and the leg, took five prisoners and, holding his pistol to the side of one, made the five bear him on a stretcher within his own lines.

A company of two hundred and fifty, that had never before been in battle, under Captain Mackey was surrounded in the Bois le Conde on July 16th and reported captured. Three hours later the captain turned up with thirty-eight men. They had refused to surrender and they cut their way through against tremendous odds. A platoon of Americans were cut off in Mezy when the Germans

got across the Marne. They took positions from which the Germans could not dislodge them and fought with their machine guns until the Americans reentered Mezy on the Monday night following. They found this platoon without food, but full of fight and mowing swaths in the ranks of the retreating Germans. In the same engagement a sergeant, J. F. Brown, commanded a detachment of eleven men sheltered from German bombardment. The onrushing Germans passed them, and as they got ready to turn their machine guns on the rear of the advancing boche a hundred more Germans appeared. The sergeant ordered his men to scatter, and from hiding places in the woods they saw the Huns put their machine guns out of com-

mission. The sergeant started towards the Marne and met his captain, who was also alone. One with an automatic rifle and the other with an automatic pistol decided to kill all the Germans they could before being killed. Hearing two machine guns back of them, they decided to get them. They crept stealthily and charged one, which killed the American captain. The sergeant killed the lone German gunner with his rifle and was reenforced by an American corporal. These two started after the second machine gun. The sergeant killed the German crew of three with his rifle when he was joined by eleven of his men who were attracted by the firing. These thirteen Americans took positions in twelve places around a German trench. At a signal

the twelve opened up with their rifles from twelve points and the sergeant started working his automatic. But the Germans, supposing they were attacked by a large party, decided to surrender, and more than one hundred men, including a major, a captain, two lieutenants and a number of non-commissioned officers, were captured. On the way through the woods with their prisoners several other parties of Germans hurriedly surrendered and the sergeant and his twelve comrades returned with one hundred and fifty-five prisoners. Americans take many prisoners, but lose fewer men by capture, in proportion to the numbers engaged, than any combatant on either side. They must be overpowered to be captured.

Our aviators are performing daring feats. Lieutenant Edmond Chamberlain of San Antonio in one day destroyed five enemy airplanes, damaged two others, scattered a detachment of Germans, captured a prisoner, and conveyed a wounded French officer to safety. Captain Charles T. Tricket of Sanders, Texas, performed a thrilling exploit in the air above Nantillois. A German aviator's machine gun set Tricket's plane on fire. To remain in his seat meant to be burned to death. The daring captain climbed out on the wing of the machine and clung to the wires while the pilot safely steered the machine to earth.

Did I say initiative? Therein resides an incalculable superiority to the Germans. They are pre-eminently me-

chanistic. Let a cog in the machinery get out of place and the whole system is disarranged. The Americans are originative, vital. Witness the American general send a note to his superior French officer, who had given the general orders to yield ground, that the American forces for the first time were retreating and that the flag had never been and should never be dishonored, and that he had taken the responsibility of ordering a counter-attack. The Americans thus hurled 15,000 Huns back across the Marne, captured 1,500 and killed and captured 8,500 the third week in July. That was the beginning of the initiative which the Allies have wrenched from the Huns, and which Germany, please God, will never regain.

The Turn of the Tide.

"Our Boys" in France have broken the spell of the German command. The ability, experience, and success of the German General Staff cast a spell over many thoughtful minds in Great Britain and France. Statesmen and strategists of Great Britain were wondering from March to July if the German Staff were in a class all to themselves and invincible. They had made five drives in the west since March. Perhaps I can give you a condensed and intelligent account of what had taken place on the western front in four epochal months.

1. The battle of Picardy. Began March 21st from St. Quentin; one hundred and ten divisions attacked on a line

of sixty-eight miles. Objective: the capture of Amiens, the railroad center of Northern France; the separation of the French army on the south from British and Belgian armies on the north; and the whipping of the flanks in accordance with the maxim of Napoleon and Stonewall Jackson. Results: The Germans drove a maximum of thirty-seven miles, overran one thousand, three hundred and fifty square miles of territory, captured tens of thousands prisoners, and were stopped only six miles east of Amiens and within forty miles of the Channel. That was the week of dark forebodings and dreadful apprehensions for many of our hearts.

2. The battle of Flanders. Began April 9th from the old Hindenburg line north

of Lens and south of Ypres, on a line of thirty-two miles. Forty divisions attacked with a concentration on a twelve-mile front between Givenchy and Fleurbaix. Objective: The channel ports and destruction of British and Belgian armies. Results: The Germans advanced an average depth of ten miles, overran two hundred and twenty-five square miles of territory and were stopped by the French coming to the relief of the British at Mt. Kemmel, within twenty-eight miles of Dunkirk on the Channel.

3. The battle of the Aisne (also called the battle for Paris). Began May 27th from the Chemin-des-Dames. Twenty-five divisions on a front of sixty miles were thrown against seven divisions, three of whom were battered divisions

removed from Flanders to an inactive sector for rest. Objective: The capture of Paris. Results: The Germans progressed a maximum of thirty-two miles, overran eight hundred and fifty square miles of territory, and rested on the Marne forty miles from Paris. This drive was the greatest surprise of the three and played havoc with the unequal opposing forces.

4. The battle of the Oise. Began June 9th on a twenty-mile line from Noyon to Montdidier. Objective: The capture of Compeigne and opening the way to Paris. Results: Advanced a maximum depth of eight miles and came to dead halt after three days. The least successful of the four drives.

5. The second battle of the Marne.

Began July 15th on the battle line from Chateau-Thierry up the river beyond Dormans, northward across the Vesle, around Rheims, and nearly to the Argonne Forest in the east. The fighting began by forty-two divisions attacking on a line of sixty miles and lengthened to one hundred miles and increased to seventy divisions, and then to eighty-four. Objective: The elimination of the Rheims salient, the capture of Chalons, and the straightening of the German line for a final, supreme, and successful move on Paris, which it was hoped would secure a German peace in 1918. Results: Germans were held up by the Allies in front of their second line trenches east of Rheims, but crossed the Marne, turned eastward and were achieving critical

success when Mangin delivered the counter-attack July 18th which turned the tide of battle and changed the whole complexion of the war.

The Part "Our Boys" Played.

Note these facts: (1) The German offensive of March was not a surprise; it had been heralded to the world and the Allies thought their lines would hold. (2) The Germans succeeded in massing a superiority of from three to five to one against the Allies in their first three drives. (3) They overran twenty-five hundred and twenty-five square miles of territory. (4) They probably killed as many as they lost and claimed the capture of 191,454 prisoners and vast stores of supplies and munitions.

(5) The colossal combination of men and material was winning a decision by sheer force when the Americans met and held them on the Marne June 5th. (6) The Americans were not only successful in this fight, which was defensive, but shone brilliantly in local offensives which captured Cantigny May 28th, Belleau Wood June 11th, Vaux July 1st, and eagerly assisted the Australians in their advance at Hamel July 4th. (7) The first of the five German drives that failed to get beyond the first line trenches was the July offensive east of Rheims and a division of Americans were with the French on that line under Gouraud. Directly west of Rheims the lines also held, and two divisions of Americans were there under Berthelot. (8) The

first time this year that attack was met by attack was on July 15th, when the American general disobeyed the French orders to retréat. The American idea is to meet the attack of the Hun and not retire before him or allow him to run over them. They have shown the Allies what rifles are for—not simply to use as bayonets and clubs, but to shoot with deadly aim before the enemy is on you. In justice to our Allies, it must be remembered that numerical inferiority had forced defensive measures in the earlier campaigns of 1918. (9) The first large counter-attack by the Allies was July 18th, when Mangin threw his forces against Von Boehm's exposed right flank on a line of twenty-eight miles from Belleau Wood to Fonterroy, and rolled

it up to within two miles of Soissons. Thirty per cent. of Mangin's forces were Americans. But for the stand of the marines at Chateau-Thierry the Germans would be in Paris to-day—but for the American aggressive the Germans would still have the initiative. All Americans should know what troops broke the German spell and saved civilization. The Fifth and Sixth Marines were the first, and they have won undying fame. There were also the First and Second corps, under Generals Liggett and Wright, comprising the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Twenty-sixth, Twenty-eighth, Thirty-second, and Forty-second (Rainbow) divisions of the American Expeditionary Forces. They have added new glory to our flag and won the eternal

gratitude of all lovers of freedom. Our other troops will rank with these when they have their chance. General Mangin on August 7th congratulated the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the American army in language which should warm all our hearts: "Shoulder to shoulder with your French comrades you threw yourselves into the counter-offensive begun on July 18th. You ran to it as if going to a feast. Your magnificent dash upset and surprised the enemy, and your indomitable tenacity stopped counter-attacks by his fresh divisions. You have shown yourselves to be worthy sons of your great country and have gained the admiration of your brothers in arms." The taciturn General Foch says, "The Americans are

splendid and wonderfully gallant in the field."

What would be the situation at present had not the Americans held the Huns when they threw themselves against them at the point of their nearest approach to Paris, and at the time when the French were beaten and retreating? Paris expected to be captured and preparations for evacuation were completed. Each Y. M. C. A. worker had been told how to leave and where to go; the Louvre department store had sold out in one day its entire supply of bags, suit cases and trunks. The war came within three weeks of being lost by the Allies, or prolonged indefinitely. Creasy, in his Decisive Battles of the World, describes and discusses Valmy which was fought in the

present war zone one hundred and twenty-six years ago. There Kellerman whipped the Prussians and Austrians and gave undying prestige to the newborn French republic. There drafted men from the lower and middle classes showed that they could face cannon, fire bullets, and cross bayonets without being trained into a military machine or officered by the scions of nobility, and there "they awoke to the consciousness of their own instinctive soldiership." Goethe, then a young man, was a spectator of the battle and he said to his defeated friends: "From this place and from this day forth commences a new era in the world's history; and you can all say that you were present at its birth." A hundred years from now tourists will

stand with uncovered heads at Chateau-Thierry and say: "Here is where the Marines stopped the Huns! Here is where America saved Paris! Here is where Washington paid his debt to Lafayette! Here is where freedom lit her torch on autocracy's funeral pyre!"

The successes of Haig on the Lys, August 7th, and of Rawlinson on the Somme, August 8th, were made possible by the heroism of the Americans in the battle of the Aisne in June and the second battle of the Marne in July. Aye, Allenby's triumph in Palestine and d'Esperey's in Macedonia in September are closely related to American achievements in France. "Our Boys" are too modest to make the claim, but when the pages of impartial history are unfolded

they will reveal the truth that the Americans wrenched victory from defeat and turned the winter of allied disaster into the glorious summer of triumph. Nor have our men been idle since. The first shocks and experiences of battle made them eager for more. Frank Simonds says, "They entered the semi-finals of the war at Saint Mihiel." Get a brief, comprehensive grasp of Saint Mihiel. It fell to the Germans September 25, 1914, and the Kaiser sent back a message that thrilled Germany. The Huns were stopped there by Joffre's turning movement in the west, but still held the salient as a menace to Verdun and an obstacle to any future move on Briery or Lorraine. Joffre made two costly, futile attempts to eliminate the salient—one in February,

1915, and another in the summer of the same year. It became an inactive sector where Americans were trained. At midnight Thursday, September 12th, the bombardment began; at 5 A. M. the attack was delivered, and by Friday Secretary Baker and Generals Pershing and Petain entered San Mihiel. Seven divisions of Germans and Austrians, 90,000 men, had fought; 25,000 of them had been captured, and 15,000 killed or wounded. Enormous amount of guns, munitions and provisions were captured and impetuous Americans who had outrun their commissary department ate out of captured German kitchens. More Americans fought side by side than in any battle in our history; a larger uninterrupted advance was made in one

day than in any other day of four years' fighting on the western front; more prisoners were taken than in any one day on the French front; a larger area of French territory was liberated than in one day since trench warfare began in the fall of 1914. The stage was cleared for further action, which will follow after these lines are written, September 16th.

Valorous and Victorious.

"Our Boys" in France have the will to win. We are proud of them all. Two negroes were discussing the war. One said, "De gub'ment ken tak yer, but de gub'ment kan't make yer fite." The other negro answered, "Dat's so. De gub'ment kan't make yer fite, but de gub'ment kan tak yer and carry yer

'cross de ocean and put yer over dar whar de fiting is so thick dat a man hav des natur'ly got to use his own bes jug'ment." Those negroes, like all of our troops, are using their best judgment and are standing like Gibraltar in defense and attacking like madmen in offense. The apparent disloyalty among the negroes at the beginning of the war was due to colored, or more frequently mulatto, agitators. These would-be leaders are pestilential fire-brands. Such negroes are the enemies of their race and a standing menace to our country. Be it said to the credit of the great mass of negroes: the voices of the German propagandists were quickly drowned in the rising and resounding chorus of negro patriotism. In France, the negroes have

taken to their changed environment like ducks to water and France has taken to them like boys to pancakes. If the the truth must be told, plain women of France are spoiling the negroes. Some married ones of my acquaintance have written back, "We sho does lack it over here. Dey treats us lack white folks. We gwine stay here adder de war is ober. Tell our wives de ken git 'em some udder husbands." Negro character is the same everywhere. The humorous traits that make us laugh in the South crop out in France. Some negroes were in a dug-out on which a German shell burst. Four or five were killed and two or three entombed. Shortly, one of these climbed out of the debris minus an arm and began searching for

something. Another negro asked, "What yer looking fer?" "My arm." "No use ter look fer dat. 'Tain't gwine do yer no more good." "Yas, but I wanter git my wrist watch." Pershing called for 1,500 volunteers from among 5,000 colored troops for a hazardous undertaking. Every man of the 5,000 stepped forward. Led by white officers, they make fine fighters. Frankly, I fear the social and political situation unavoidably being created by the participation of the negroes in this war. In old age, the seer Jefferson said the race question "startled him like a bell in the night." It will be more acute when the negro troops come home; but this is afield from the testimony I gladly bear to their valor in battle. Only remember and be prepared for the in-

evitable hour—the negro soldiers and their new status in the South after the war.

The will to win dominates every camp in America. "Our Boys" are full of confidence and eager to fight. A father received the following letter from his only boy:

Paris Island, S. C.
July 21, 1918.

"Dear Foddy:

"I am just overflowing with the best of news. On yesterday morning our battalion 'hiked' into the Ammunition Depot. At that place we handed in our Lee Enfields, as the Enfield is only used during the first few weeks of training, and in exchange we were given the U. S. Springfield, 30-30. The Enfield is a good gun, the second best in the world; but the Springfield is far and away the better of the two. It's lighter, shorter, easier to clean, better sights, and it has numerous other advantages.

"After midday 'chow' (our name for food) we were given more good tidings. Sergeant Young, our present company commander, announced that on Monday we were destined to go on the range. Needless to relate, everyone in our company is now 'all smiles,' for the range means that we are getting closer to our objective—Berlin, Germany.

"This morning, after we had 'policed' quarters, I went over to the 'Y' (Y. M. C. A.) and heard Chaplain Rentez talk on 'The Real Man.' He handled the subject very well and I enjoyed his talk.

"After a greatly enjoyed midday 'chow' our sergeant informed me that Captain Denby desired to see me at his tent. I immediately put on my 'best' and proceeded to the captain's tent. It proved that the captain wanted to see me in regard to the O. T. C. (Officers' Traininf Camp). However, I told him it would be impossible for me to go, as I was only seventeen and had not the two years' college education. He then asked me the branch of marines I desired to join. I gave him three—ambulance, dispatch driver, or ammunition runner. He said

that the marines were badly in need of these men, and he thought I could get into one of those branches in about eight weeks. I hope this is certain, for those units are sure to 'go across,' and quickly, and you know I'm in an awful rush to comé in contact with the Huns.

"Foddy, I declare the life here is simply great —it just suits me to a 'T.' I like it better each day. I tell you it's good to know that one is at last trying to do his real duty.

"As I have said before, tomorrow we go on the range, and that means that our rifles must be in A-1 shape, so I will have to close, as my Springfield needs a three-in-one oil bath.

"Lots and lots of love for dear mother.

"Your devoted boy."

That letter is typical of thousands of other letters and is representative of American youth. Joyce Kilmer, that pure poet who has made the supreme sacrifice, wrote the "Prayer of a Soldier in France" with a touch of inspiration:

"My shoulders ache beneath my pack,
(Lie easier, Cross, upon His back).

I march with feet that burn and smart,
(Tread, Holy Feet, upon my heart).

Men shout at me who may not speak,
(They scourged Thy back and smote Thy cheek).

I may not lift a hand to clear
My eyes of salty drops that sear.

(Then shall my fickle soul forget
That Agony of Bloody Sweat?)

My rifle hand is stiff and numb,
(From Thy pierced palm red rivers come).

Lord, Thou didst suffer more for me
Than all the hosts of land and sea.

So let me render back again
This millionth of Thy gift. Amen."

Defiant Hun prisoners are declaring, "We will win the war or we will all go to hell." They are a determined and des-

perate foe, for there is nothing left to the militarists when Germany is beaten. Germany's national debt totals thirty billions—thirty-six per cent. of her wealth. Her internal war loans to July 1st amount to $20,814,000,000. Her average national income is $156.7 per capita and her debt is $447.7 per capita. She has destroyed $5,000,000,000 of the allied property. Six generations will not pay their war debt. Any peace agreement will require them to restore and indemnify Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, Roumania, Albania, and the other territory they have devastated; this will extend the tax three generations. If Great Britain insists, as she should, that Germany shall pay for all the ships sunk by her submarines, the tax will extend one

more generation. With her ships taken from her never to be returned, her colonies gone, her foreign trade lost, her best men dead, her civilization discredited, and her rulers a hiss and by-word among the peoples of the earth, Germany will face the most colossal collapse in the history of nations. The only safe course for us to pursue is to count on her fighting as long as there is hope to avert the disaster which her madness provoked. The Americans are saying, "We will win the war and die in God's own time and go to Heaven in the faith of the Gospel." One of my Red Cross nurses, who was in the first unit to go to France, and is close to the fighting, writes: "Our Boys are wonders. They are so brave and happy. We get them direct from the line. They are

full of the proper spirit. They do not want to stay in the hospital long enough to get well. We feel sure of their success. My! but it is a great satisfaction to know our own boys are between us and the enemy. We feel very much protected, even though we are under heavy barrage day and night." "Our Boys" are saying:

"If worse than body's death or body's maiming
Should be my portion here in ravaged France,
God keep me from the coward's way of blaming
'The power of untoward circumstance.'

"Does just the lack of losing make the winner?
Does just the lack of smirching make the clean?
Temptation never made a man a sinner—
It shows the world what only God had seen.

"If I must fall, may I go bravely under,
Not shirking my own weakness, my own shame,
Evils enough are bred of battle's thunder,
But wrongs it never fathered bear its name.

"God, give me strength to keep my colors flying,
Against whatever comes to lay them low;
But if I fall, God shut my lips from lying!
An outcast I may be—a dastard, NO!"

An Army of Character.

"Our Boys" over there have the morale and the morals to win. The *esprit de corps* of the troops is the highest. The religious conditions are so improved and impressive that Italy has asked the Y. M. C. A. to build huts and place workers in her army. Admiral Sims gave each man in the navy a New Testament con-

cerning which he wrote: "This Testament is a handbook of manhood. It introduces you to the Pattern-man who shows you what to become and the way to become it. Your proficiency as a member of the naval forces of your country depends upon the proper performance of your duty as a Christian." That is a nobler sentiment than Nelson expressed at Trafalgar. The head of our forces is a Christian and a temperance man. Our laws make the giving or sale of intoxicants to soldiers a crime, and France is endeavoring to co-operate in protecting the American army. Ours is the most temperate army in Europe. John Kendrick Bangs testifies that among 120,000 of our young men in France, he saw only one tipsy American boy. Perhaps this

is too rosy a view, but is nearer the truth than the wild statements of promiscuous drunkenness among the troops. The first year of the war the Germans drank ten million bottles of champagne. The second year they drank only five million bottles. The last year they drank twenty million bottles. The more they drink, the quicker and surer will we whip them. It is an historical fact that the wine cellars of France contributed largely to Von Kluck's defeat in the first battle of the Marne. The ground over which the Germans retreated was declared by visitors "to have more empty bottles than empty shells."

The basis of our lads' morality, as indeed of all morality, is religion. In twelve camps where I have spoken and

preached the men are hungry to hear vital messages of religion and reports from France are to the same effect. On a recent Sunday morning the congregation of the First Baptist Church was deeply affected by the reading of a letter from a Y. M. C. A. secretary in France certifying to the baptism of a captain from Richmond, and stating that the captain wished fellowship in the Church of which his wife was a member. The captain and eight of his men were baptized in a beautiful lake surrounded by gently sloping hills from which a regiment reverently witnessed the administration of the apostolic ordinance. Thousands of soldiers who never gave serious consideration to personal religion at home are pledging their allegiance to Christ. The very

atmosphere is conducive to seriousness, to resolution, to trust. Some Christian workers discount the most effective agency they have, viz: religion. They do not rightly interpret the needs and longings of the men.

An army chaplain made a valuable discovery which it would be fortunate for all chaplains to know. To his surprise he found that the men were more interested in vital religion, served out straight, than in moving pictures. A venerable minister put the question of what they preferred right up to the men themselves. "Boys, I've come here to tell you something about religion. Would you like to begin right away or would you rather have a movie film first?" A tall, raw-boned soldier stood up in the

audience and spoke: "To hell with the movies. Let's hear about religion!" The boys are quick to detect camouflage, but the real article of religion they recognize and appreciate. They never yet left a real man of God who gave his message "right off the bat." The highest authority on the place of religion among the troops is General Pershing. Responding to the communication from the Churches of America, he said, "We know that mere wealth of material resources or even of technical skill will not suffice. The invisible and unconquerable force let loose by the prayers and hopes and ideals of Christian America, of which you are representative, is incalculable. It steadies us to resist manfully those temptations which assail us in the extraordinary

conditions of life in which we find ourselves. Your message of loyalty to us draws this reciprocal message of loyalty to you. We of the army think with gratitude and emotion of the unflagging service and wonderful trust in us of the Churches at home. May we prove ourselves worthy of it."

The Hearts at Home.

What must be our attitude towards "Our Boys" over there? In every possible way we must cheer their hearts. Certain financial lepers would sell stocks when the Americans are winning and buy them back when the Americans are losing, and thus would profit by the ebb and flow of the battle tide of their own men. What effect would it have on the spirits

of "Our Boys" to know of this contemptible conduct? I want no dollar made by such practices. I stand with them and behind them, winning or losing, and should they go down, I would want to go down with them. Keeping sad news to ourselves and conserving food are small in comparison with the hardships they endure.

We can make it easy when they go. An officer from Camp Funston was transferred to another camp the week the troops in the second camp entrained for the port. He said he never saw such a disheartening scene. Wives, sisters, sweethearts, mothers—women in large numbers—wept and clung to the men as they took their leave. The separation is trying to "Our Boys" without our mak-

ing it more so by giving way to emotion. If you have tears to shed, stay them until the departing soldiers are out of your sight. It takes courage, but what are we for if not to manifest just that kind of self-control? A Virginia mother, a widow, whose son, formerly captain of the Washington and Lee baseball team, wrote her not to come to Camp Lee to tell him good-bye, as he wanted to spare her the ordeal, replied, "John, I am coming. It will be a comfort to me to see you just before you go across." She bade him good-bye without a tear, and as she kissed him on one cheek and then the other, she said, "God's banner of love be over my boy. I am proud of you." As she turned away some of the young men, who were too far from home

for their mothers to be present, remarked upon her courage and wondered how a mother could be so brave. She said to them, "God helps me, young men, and I restrained my tears for John's sake." But she did cry all the way to Richmond, and most of the night. That was all right.

We must strengthen them to stay until their task is finished. The Kaiser's American dentist saw two books on the table of the Kaiser's bedroom. The title of one was "The World War." The title of the other was "The Next World War." It is the next world war against which we are fighting. I would rather have my back bend beneath burdens and my heart wrung by anguish and know that the generations that come after me

are to live under the blue skies of peace and the bright sunshine of prosperity than to see this war prematurely ended and another generation have to go through the valley of the shadow which darkens the continent of Europe to-day. It were traitorous to our descendants to bequeath to them the legacy of an unfinished war. It were treasonable to those who have died in the conflict to stop short of complete victory, of unconditional surrender, of dictated peace based upon wrongs righted and justice established. If it requires the life of every man now enlisted under the stars and stripes to win a just, righteous, lasting and universal peace I would rather see that price paid than for unsettled issues to remain to convulse the earth with another earth-

quake of war. When I say that it means my family name would be wiped out.

"Is it too much to ask, that he I love
Shall come back safe to me,
That his young limbs be still as straight and strong,
His brave young eyes still see?

"Is it too much, when countless women's hearts
Mourn the beloved dead,
Or break to see torn bodies, crippled limbs,
Eyes whence the light has fled?

"Is it too much, then, God, I would ask more;
That he come safe to Thee,
His white young soul unblemished and unscarred,
March homeward strong and free."

Again, we must prepare our own hearts for heavy casualties. They are just beginning to come, but as far as human prescience can tell they will multiply

into tens of thousands. Be not unduly elated by present successes. Even these spell thousands of lives. Wounded returned marines have told me they lost seven out of ten men at the Marne June 5th and 6th. Their estimate is probably too high, but the losses must have been heavy to have made such an impression. Upon reliable authority from an officer at Quantico I may state that one machine gun battery trained there was literally wiped out — every man wounded or killed. In the counter-offensive on one day, July 19th, seventeen out of twenty company commanders were lost, forty out of a battery of eight hundred remained, and companies of two hundred and fifty were reduced to fifty, commanded by a kid second lieu-

tenant. We fight a strong and unscrupulous foe who can be whipped only by superior man power. We must catch the spirit of that first American mother who lost her son in France and said, "God has highly honored me in making me the mother of a son who died for the world's freedom." Ex-President Roosevelt's bearing was worthy of the high office he once filled. I am a democrat as my forefathers were, but when a man attacks Mr. Roosevelt's patriotism I am disposed to ask him, "How many sons have you sent to the war?" He has given his all—four. One enlisted with the Allies before we declared war and has recently joined the American colors in France. One is wounded in a French hospital, and one has been invalided

home. The youngest sleeps in a military grave at the edge of a wood at Chambray. Quentin, the baby boy, had brought down his first airplane and was killed attacking seven others. When the sad intelligence of the youngest son's death reached his father, Mr. Roosevelt said, "Quentin's mother and I are glad that he was able to render some service to his country before his fate befell him." He showed himself a worthy ex-President. Such hearts at home will make "Our Boys" in France more than equal to any task.

"Out of it all shall come splendor and gladness,
Out of the madness and out of the sadness,
Cleaner and finer the world shall arise;
Why, then, keep sorrow and doubt in your eyes?

"Not in vain, not in vain, is our bright banner flying,
Not for naught are the sons of our fond mothers dying;
The gloom and despair are not ever to last,
The world shall be better when they shall have passed.

"So mourn not his absence, but smile and be brave,
You shall have him again from the brink of the grave,
In a wonderful world 'neath a wonderful sun,
He shall come to your arms with his victory won."

Getting Ready for Their Return.

Be prepared for their home-coming when the war is over. Thousands will sleep beneath the white crosses and wild-flowers of shell-torn Europe; an appreciable per cent. will marry, enter business, and live in France; but the vast

majority will come home. Then we shall have new and grave problems—economic, domestic, educational, political and religious. The business world must get ready for the return of our men. Their old positions will be filled by others and labor will be plentiful and employment scarce. Wherever possible, without doing injustice, their pre-war jobs should be offered them. Physicians who gave up their practice to minister to our men should certainly have their former patients, and even more. Lawyers should find that old clients are as loyal to them as they have been to the government. Unless we begin to grow a conscience on this question now, professional men, once with lucrative practices, may hear "hard times a-knockin' at de door"

when they resume practice. Lionizing our returned soldiers will not suffice. The modest will shrink from it. All worthy ones will want employment where they can earn an honest living. The cripples will be better served by positions they can fill acceptably than by charity. Canada provides free vocational training, with soldiers' pay, for her crippled, and the United States should not do less. The able Secretary of the Interior, Franklin Lane, has a vast plan for draining the fertile swamp lands and settling soldiers on them on terms of forty years payment. 'Tis a noble conception with many difficulties in application. It will not appeal to some soldiers and measures must be devised for them. It is the bounden duty of every business man to

devote his best thought to the question of assimilating the returned soldiers into the economic life of the country in a way conducive to prosperity.

Our domestic life owes a solemn obligation to the returning soldiers. What a joy to discharge that obligation! Of course, the boy's room will be arranged just as he liked it before he went away. If lodgers have occupied it they must vacate. How good it will feel to sleep in that bed once more! Indulge him for a time in late rising. He is short on sleep, anyway, and the old freedom is refreshing. Prepare the dishes he relishes. No fear of spoiling him. He wants to be a boy again for a little while. Make real those dreams he dreamed in France of "Home, Sweet Home." Soon enough

he will be up and out and about serious tasks.

Our educational life must be rearranged and adapted to the needs of the soldiers. War has created a demand for education. Grown men, unprepared for college, will have seen the advantages of education and will come back with a thirst for knowledge. The horizon of the world will have been opened to boys who never saw beyond their native plains and mountains. The tragedy of the South after Appomattox must not be repeated and our young men who served their country must not limp through life for the lack of an education. Thank God we shall have less of "German scholarship," which was at heart Christless rationalism. The State and de-

nominational schools must arrange their curricula so as to take and train such of these men as want an education. The test of the character and efficiency of our colleges and universities must be their ability to meet and supply the demands of the young men after the war.

Political life will inevitably be affected by the returned soldiers. They have ventured their all for a principle and will have little patience with the devotees of expediency. Perhaps some will have been disgusted with the politics that played in commissions and promotions. We may expect our returned men to figure prominently in public affairs and the government will be better for their participation. They have seen and studied other governments; they have thought on na-

tional and international questions; they will have views of their own and courage and ability to express them. But what will they say of the people who filled their own coffers with money while our soldiers were jeoparding their lives in Europe?

Religious life, too, must be ready for the returning soldiers. This is vital to all else. If we fail here we have lost incalculably though we may have whipped the Huns. Periods following wars have been periods of demoralization and drifting away from the churches and God. Oh, for wisdom and power in the churches to greet, grip and hold the soldiers when they come home! There is danger of "overworking" the war. Of that they will be surfeited.

Tens of thousands will have found Christ in the camps but will need training for service. Many will come back fatalists and many more devout than when they went away. A worshipful atmosphere, soulful singing, heartfelt p r a y i n g, straightforward preaching must be our methods if we would make Christ an ever-present reality to them, and His Churches the house of God and the gate of Heaven. Yes, some time Our Boys are coming from Europe where they will have broken the sword of tyranny, across seas in which assassins no longer lurk, into ports of peace and plenty and to homes that love them with deathless affection. God speed that day.

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